

From: "Robert Tharp" <[spanlib@earthlink.net](mailto:spanlib@earthlink.net)>  
To: [wtc@nist.gov](mailto:wtc@nist.gov)  
Subject: Unresolved questions concerning WTC 7 "Swiss cheese" steel.

Gentlemen,

It has come to my attention that no conclusive position has been taken concerning the steel in WTC 7 which showed signs of eutectic melting, which some conspiracy theorists have taken as signs of thermite or other exoptic accelerants in the building.

My first enlistment in the military was in the US Air Force as a Fire Protection Specialist. During that time, I had occassion to get college-level training in arson investigations. As a part of that course, I had occassion to work weith several types of thermite, including a cast charge using rust, aluminum powder and plaster of Paris. This is the only compound of thermite which I can concieve of capable of doing the sort of damage that would have been neccessary. The problem, from the perspective of conspiracy theorists, is that it would have left a crust of alumina on the steel which water would not have removed.

During the years that I was out of the service, from 1970-77, I took several art courses in which I had occassion to do metal etching using acid resist and nitric acid. To me, some of the pictures of the Swiss cheese steel resemble the effects of acid on metal, specifically the vermiculated pattern shown on the eroded surfaces of some samples. This would account for the thinning of the steel. The deposits of copper in the grain of the steel are, to my thinking, consistant with the exposure of the steel to copper sulphate, which, in an aqueous solution, tends to release copper to the surface of steel.

Among the items known or to be expected to be in any office building which depends to any extent on lead-acid batteries for back-up power supplies, would be a great quantity of sulphuric acid. Given the nature of the OEM, I should expect there to have been a large number of such batteries in the facility.

Given the nature of the fires in the rubble, and the nature of the fuels being burned, I should expect there to have been some dilute sulphuric acid and other similar acids percolating through the entire mass. This would form copper sulphate from the plumbing and wiring of the building. Dillute sulphuric acid will erode steel more quickly that does fuming sulphur acid.

This cause of the erosion and eutectic melting should be investigated for the final report. It would, if supported by findings, greatly diminish the value that this phenomenon has to the conspiracy theorists. The questions raised at the public announcement of the draft report by Mr Geiger from Infowars included reference to this material, as I recall.

Thank you for any consideration you may give to this theory.

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